

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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S-E-C-R-E-T

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COUNTRY Bulgaria

REPORT

SUBJECT Uranium Mining near Bukhovo

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This is UNEVALUATED Information

SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE

1. On the southern and southwestern slopes of Mount Goten, Elin Pelin Okoliya, there is an active uranium mining center of considerable size. Uranium ore which allegedly is of excellent quality is extracted here. The mineral deposits were discovered by German technicians during World War II who installed equipment for the exploiting of the deposits. The mine was abandoned at the end of the war but was reactivated about two years ago by the Soviets who recently have increased the equipment and expanded the labor force.
2. Recently the working force has reached 3,000, principally because of the higher pay which compensates for the hard work and difficult living conditions. The workers are watched during working hours by Soviet sentries. At the end of each shift the workers are thoroughly searched in order to prevent their carrying away even the smallest sample of ore.
3. The mine directorate is located in the village of Bukhovo (N 42-46, E 23-34). Immediately north of Bukhovo, a village for the miners has been constructed and is now being enlarged. This village includes many modern conveniences such as a hospital, a movie, and modern homes and shops. The village was constructed in order to keep the miners under continuous control and to prevent them from leaving the locality under any circumstances.
4. The extracted ore is crushed and worked on the spot and is packed in wooden or metal cases similar to a munitions box but slightly larger. Every evening the boxes are sealed and carried by motor convoy to the nearby Yana (N 42-44, E 23-34) railroad station. A Soviet guard is aboard each truck. At the railroad station the boxes are immediately loaded on freight cars, which are also sealed and guarded, for shipment elsewhere.
5. In the Yana railroad station there are depots for these loads, but they are no longer used because transportation has now been arranged so as to avoid stopovers and storing. The motor convoys have a definite schedule, just as a train, and very severe penalties and fines are imposed on the convoy leaders in the event of a delay.

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6. It has not so far been possible to get any indication of the technical and mineralogical characteristics such as quantity, percentage of uranium, index of radioactivity, of the ore extracted here.

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